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## Joan Huber, Irving Louis Horowitz, and the Ideological Future of Objectivity in American Sociology

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The occasion of this essay is an unsolicited but welcome invitation to comment on Irving Louis Horowitz's (1993) most recent book, *The Decomposition of Sociology*, a work that is generating considerable discussion (e.g., Bauer-Mengelberg 1995; Chriss 1994; Goldman 1994; Horowitz 1994, 1995; Pizzorno 1994; Wagner 1994). An invitation to discuss a book by Horowitz in a public forum—to which he is invited to respond—is a genuine honor eagerly accepted here with what is undoubtedly a too small twinge of apprehension, a twinge of the minimally regarded kind that allows proverbial fools to rush into intellectual tight spots from which only angels, sympathetic cronies, and humble *mea culpas* can extricate them. Professor Horowitz's debating skills are considerable and legendary; they are challenged only at one's peril. I vividly recall, for example, a peripheral critique that sociologist Harold Leonard Orbach, then and now an associate professor of sociology at Kansas State University, once launched at Horowitz's (1983) authoritative intellectual biography of C. Wright Mills.

The setting for Orbach's comeuppance was an "author meets the critics" session at the meetings of the Midwest Sociological Society shortly after the publication of Horowitz's *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*. In response to Orbach's nitpicking provocations, Horowitz first whittled his tormenter down to size, reminding us publicly that when Orbach and Horowitz were students enrolled together in a sociological theory course, Horowitz earned an "A" whereas Orbach received a substantially lower mark. Simultaneously undermining Orbach's sociological aptitude and unearthing the specter of old student jealousies as motivation for Orbach's criticisms, Horowitz eventually decapitated Orbach's tangential commentary and concluded in a deliberate, thunderous, unanswerable crescendo: "If you want to know about Mills's ideas and intellectual development, read my book. If you want to know about a person's private life, then read *People Magazine*!"

When he hits his stride, Professor Horowitz is an undisputed master of the crushing, well-deserved *mot juste*. Thus, it is the opportunity to engage Professor Horowitz here at typographical arm's length—in distant print rather than face-to-face on the after-dinner dias—that gives me sufficient temerity to offer the following observations, run for cover, and hope for his dispensation and understanding. My comments are intended, after all, not as combative confrontation, but as convivial conversation (Deegan 1989).

Do I too detect the rampant destruction of sociology that Irving Louis

Horowitz (1993) senses in *The Decomposition of Sociology* and to which he suggests I contributed (Hill 1984) by insisting on the important but largely unrecognized role ideology plays in framing sociological research and departmental politics? The politics of political correctness can, at times, get out of hand, but unreflexive reliance on rationality and received canons can also be problematic. Integral to Horowitz's resounding condemnation of subjectivity in *Decomposition* is his unexamined, *a priori* faith in "objectivity." This faith is fundamentally ideological rather than rational, and his ideological agenda remains hidden and unexplicated. To encourage Professor Horowitz to reflect on his unstated ideological assumptions, I draw attention to Joan Huber's (1995) recent crack-the-whip discourse on the presumed plight of American sociology.<sup>1</sup>

Huber and Horowitz both appeal to rational dialogue, academic civility, and objectivity, but with radically different results. Horowitz (1993:249) observes that "the risks of eclecticism...are far less risky in human terms than demands for theoretical perfections built on dogmatic assumptions," and concludes:

The challenge of the twenty-first century is to narrow the gap between technical progress and moral stagnation. We can best meet this challenge in the social sciences by permitting in the fresh breezes of other times and places, by reading the past's religious literature, its poetry, and its novels and by learning about its heroes, its architecture, sports, foods, occupations, and technology (p. 251).

Huber, on the other hand, clamps shut "the fresh breezes," eschews the humanities, and unabashedly pimps her students as statistically-trained suppliers of "the knowledge needed to run welfare states." Huber reaches her conclusions by presumably objective, rational dialogue, or so she says. How is this possible? By shamelessly subverting the consensual meaning of "objectivity" for her own patently ideological ends, ends that cannot be attacked if "objectivity" remains above the fray, unsullied by ideological critique. Horowitz (1993:244) understands that "the struggle within each scientific discipline is...an ideological forum," but does not see that his deep, unreflexive attachment to "objectivity" makes him a useful tool in the ideological campaigns led by Huber and her tribe.

Huber's "report" is discussed here for three reasons: (1) She encourages top-down, bottom-line, anti-intellectual thinking and her essay will undoubtedly be used instrumentally to rationalize and legitimate hiring, tenure, curriculum, budget, and related decisions made by managerially-minded administrators in the academy, (2) Horowitz's nostalgic and surprisingly unreflexive embrace of "objectivity" as a redemptive salve for what he perceives to be a rapidly decomposing sociology unwittingly lends support to those, like Huber, who trade fast and loose with "objectivity" as an ideological pawn in high stakes academic politics, and (3) Huber's (1995:204) Machiavellian masquerade as a "disinterested observer seeking objective truth" serves to underscore the on-going

urgency of my own call, a call damned by Horowitz, to place greater emphasis on ideological realities in sociology. Huber's ideological subversion of "objectivity" provides a painful example of a problematic too easily dismissed by many sociologists of Horowitz's generation: the messy reality that "objectivity" is considerably more slippery and ideologically volatile than they presume it to be.

"Objectivity" is a taken-for-granted catchword in academic discussions; it appeals easily to our sense of fair play and evenhandedness—and in that sense it is a sentiment to which I subscribe. Huber, however, gives "objectivity" an impudently scientific spin. To *whose* slant on objectivity shall we subscribe? For myself, Anthony Giddens (1987:11-13) provides a helpful and sobering guide:

To speak of sociology, and of other subjects like anthropology or economics, as "social sciences," is to stress that they involve the systematic study of an empirical subject-matter. The terminology is not confusing so long as we see that sociology and other social sciences differ from the natural sciences in two essential respects.

(1) We *cannot* approach society, or "social facts," as we do objects or events in the natural world, because societies only exist in so far as they are created and recreated in our own actions as human beings....

(2) It follows from this that the practical implications of sociology are not directly parallel to the technological uses of science, and cannot be....It is often precisely by showing that what may appear to those involved as inevitable, as unchallengeable—as resembling a law of nature—is, in fact, an historical product, that sociological analysis can play an emancipatory role in human society.

Some find Giddens less instructive, however. Huber once dismissed out of hand a colloquium question I posed concerning the import of Giddens's ideas with the condescending reply: "I'm sure Giddens's is a bright young man, *but....*" For Huber, science, rationality, statistical analysis, and objectivity are cut all from the same cloth, tailored together in standard issue sociological straight jackets that all of us should meekly don as Huber leads us, blinkers firmly in place, into the messy, unpredictable world of shark-infested social realities.

Huber (1995:202) complains that current sociological research is too easily trivialized by administrators and is too often distorted by journalists "who want the kind of human interest stories that make deans and department chairs wince." Rather than welcome and cultivate genuine public interest in (and subsequent financial support of) the types of reflexive information that ordinary citizens (not to mention undergraduate students) actually find intriguing and useful, Huber's craven council warns against all inquiry that might draw public criticism or misinterpretation by conservative board members. Huber advises that ever more

scientific research serves us well as a profession and protects us from wolfish deans on the prowl for sacrificial fiscal lambs.

Huber, herself a former dean, further cautions that to make life easier for university administrators (and thereby reap rewards and benefits, *quid pro quo*), sociology departments ought to shun those who profess "reformist" social agendas and must find antidotes for what Huber perceives as a miasma of antirationalism drifting into sociology from the humanities. She endorses the draconian, self-serving recommendations for departmental (and, therefore, disciplinary) reorganization championed by her chums in the elite world of ASA politics.<sup>2</sup> Huber believes it is *rational* to force the historically multifaceted corpus of sociology onto her Procrustean administrator's bed, lop off its essential extremities, behead its critical faculties, scoop out its vital organs, and proudly strap the resulting Frankenstein forever to a life-supporting federal grant machine. She recoils in horror at the apparently awful prospect of explaining—let alone defending—the reflexive inquiries that give sociology historical continuity, intellectual meaning and pragmatic social usefulness. To preserve bureaucratic perquisites and placate anti-intellectual administrators, Huber cashes in our sociological birthrights and tendentiously distorts the roots, visions, and accomplishments of American sociology.<sup>3</sup>

Huber apparently cannot see the elitist, irrational and scientific ideology of the inherently political proposals she advances. While gladly using the prestigious pages of the *American Journal of Sociology* to advance a reform scheme cooked-up by an ASA task group that she appointed, Huber (1995:205) unreflexively decries what she calls a relativistic view of science in which "scientific truth depends on the power of the negotiator more than on a complex relationship to an external reality that the negotiators cannot control." Unfazed by the hypocritical incongruity of her arguments, ignoring her own role as an institutionally powerful negotiator, Huber and the privileged club for which she speaks sit at the apex of disciplinary power, deftly purveying exclusionary venom; negotiating definitions of the discipline with government-sponsored agencies; nominating each other for editorships, administrative positions and distinguished achievement awards; and serving ever so tirelessly on the selection panels that fund each other's grant proposals.

Huber is a demagogue, not a democrat. Sociology, if Huber has her way, will become increasingly uncoupled from the lifeworld of real people, real students, and real sociology, a process described by Jurgen Habermas (1989:183) in which:

The transfer of action coordination from language over to steering media means an uncoupling of interaction from lifeworld contexts. Media such as money and power attach to empirical ties; they encode a purposive-rational attitude toward calculable amounts of value and make it possible to exert generalized, strategic influence on the decisions of other participants while bypassing processes of consensus-oriented communication.

Inasmuch as they do not merely simplify linguistic communication, but replace it with a symbolic generalization of rewards and punishments, the lifeworld contexts in which processes of reaching understanding are always embedded are devalued in favor of media-steered interactions; the lifeworld is no longer needed for the coordination of action.

Similarly, Huber devalues language, robbing “objectivity,” “science,” and “rationality” of any reflexive, broadly consensual meaning. She purposefully marshals state interests, research funding and university administrative power in a perverse managerial calculus, willfully snuffing out the historical, cross-cultural, and critical embers of what once was, I think, an active sociological imagination. Huber and her well-funded, structurally well-positioned buddies are orchestrating a grand power grab in which all future sociological truths will be the direct outcome of solely *their* particular social values, *their* theoretical perspectives, *their* research methodologies, and *their* political ideologies.

It is time to hold Huber and her like accountable for their pernicious, intolerant and increasingly shrill brand of antirationalist demagoguery. The ease with which sociological research today is trivialized results directly from the scientistic hypotheses and scientifically meaningless data collection and analysis techniques championed by Huber and taught in so-called “mainstream” methods courses across the United States,<sup>4</sup> *not* from the humanizing ideas, invigorating philosophical insights, and liberating political scenarios that still manage—against the stifling prejudice of Huberesque colleagues—to find voice in far more than a few sociology classrooms, professional meetings, and intellectually rigorous monographs. It becomes more difficult, however, to challenge the essence of Huber’s self-serving arrogance when a commentator of Professor Horowitz’s stature unwittingly removes “objectivity,” *deus ex machina*, from the contentious caldron of ideological scrutiny and debate.

Is sociology today a deeply troubled discipline in which “objectivity” has become irrelevant? Has “objectivity” been swamped and drowned in a tidal wave of irrational identity politics and postmodern drift? Perhaps, on occasion, but this is not the only threat to objectivity, the challenges come equally or more so from mundane mammon and the empty mimicry of science. My take on this unavoidable ideological question is experiential as well as analytical.<sup>5</sup>

I came to doctoral studies in sociology after completing in 1982 a Ph.D. in geography at Nebraska where I became well-grounded in contemporary spatial theory, was outfitted with a useful armory of data collection techniques in the physical and social sciences, and learned firsthand the strengths and foibles of statistical analyses and mathematical modelling. Indeed, I find there are a few, albeit limited, situations in which these techniques are legitimate. This training led to a visiting geography position at Iowa State University that garnered in turn an assistant deanship for research, some interesting grants, and subsequent appointments in the departments of landscape architecture and community and regional planning, respectively. I found a happy interdisciplinary niche in

environmental design research. For personal reasons, however, I left Iowa and returned to Nebraska where I eventually took up full-time doctoral studies in sociology, completing the degree in 1989. Suffice it to say, life as a Nebraska sociology graduate student was enormously disappointing by comparison to my previous work, but by pursuing a second doctorate in a new field I did purchase a relatively unique foothold from which to assess the status of a discipline that Horowitz warns is disintegrating under its own factionalism and stubborn wrongheadedness. Is sociology a deeply troubled discipline? Yes, unquestionably, and perhaps for more reasons than Horowitz fully realizes.

An early, comparative clue to the disciplinary perverseness rife among sociologists came during a series of job interviews where I was interrogated, first by geographers, and then by sociologists. The geographers' questions always included a variation on the theme: "How do your recent sociological studies *inform* your current geographical interests?" The question invited an interdisciplinary response, one that geographers—to their credit—were prepared to entertain. When I interviewed for sociology jobs, however, the inquisitors invariably asked, "Why did you *leave* geography?" The underlying assumption, as I have come to understand all too well, is that American sociologists as a group (and especially those who become administrators) are hopelessly insular. It was apparently *unthinkable* for these interviewers to conceive that someone could practice sociology without abandoning all ties to any other discipline or prior intellectual life.

Presumably this sort of addled logic prevents sociologists like Huber from ever entertaining the idea that the likes of Harriet Martineau, Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Roscoe Pound, George Herbert Mead, etc., were ever *really* sociologists. They were, after all, aligned at one time or another with diverse intellectual disciplines, were they not? Huber's brand of historical revisionism willfully excises uncomfortable contributors to our sociological heritage in the same way that systematic empiricists stupidly ignore the reality that time and time again the amount of statistical variance they leave unexplained is monstrously greater than that which they smugly present as objectively discovered "fact." Huber mulishly flames the fires of exclusionary debates over who *is* (and who is *not*) a sociologist (Deegan 1987), creating an unwelcome climate that wastefully stifles the relevance, sagacity, and tempering effect of widespread interdisciplinary exchange with neighboring disciplinarians, including those in the humanities. Make no mistake, Huber is hosting a puritanical witch hunt and those of us who disagree with her will soon feel the flaming faggots 'round our feet—if she has her way.

Professor Horowitz, by contrast, is a maverick sociologist, a prototypical interdisciplinary scholar of which the multifaceted books and journals issued by Transaction Publications are elegant and substantive testimony. He reads books, thinks about ideas, and writes provocatively. He does not engage in mindless scientism. When he tells us what sociology ought to be, and thus by implication who the *real* sociologists *really* are, he clearly knows better than many who call



themselves sociologists. Perhaps we ought to listen.

The difficulty of getting anyone to listen to Professor Horowitz is, however, no small matter. He comments at length on writers most of whom many contemporary sociology students and many of their mentors have never studied. Intellectual rigor is wanting in American sociology today, but not for lack of required statistical training as Huber inexplicably concludes. I meet too many highly touted graduate students who willingly spend endless hours at CRTs but who read, at best, only excerpts or cursory synopses of Durkheim, Marx, Weber and the like ("If it's not in *ASR*, why bother?").<sup>6</sup> This is not a crowd to whom the names Adorno, Edel, Feuer, or, for that matter, Horowitz, have any resonance ("Are these guys sociologists, how come I never heard of 'em?"). With few exceptions, today's students do not read the works of Small, Ross, Park, Burgess, Homans, Merton, Myrdal, Nisbet, Parsons, Thomas, Berger, Lipset, Lippmann, or Lynd, just to round up some of the better-known patriarchs that sociologists of Horowitz's generation and training take for granted. Nor do they read deeply, if at all, from the major treatises of more recent theorists. The general lack of scholarly preparation and intellectual curiosity is shocking, regardless of whose canon one champions or critiques, and it's a problem that an erudite book like *The Decomposition of Sociology* misses altogether. It's a problem that Horowitz cannot practically conceive, or he would not have written the book he did. He might as well write in foreign tongues, like Spanish, French or German, as these too are no longer required for a sociology doctorate at Nebraska and many other programs.

Horowitz's arguments are irrelevant to the hard core and befuddled fringe of scientific sociologists in the midwest, at least. A few of the larger quantitative programs tolerate transient outcroppings of "alternative" sociologies, but the chief work, the mainline activity that gets good pay, tenure-track jobs, and the back-slapping congratulations of deans and institutional development officers is nothing less than the well-funded number crunching that Huber champions. The smaller programs, like Nebraska, simply ape their bigger counterparts, jumping blindly on the same scientific bandwagons. It can be tragic to be an unwary student or a naive new faculty member in this vortex of money, status, and greed. There is little room for ideas, unless they can be reduced to an equation or milked for a grant. There is certainly little understanding of or sympathy for the high level of erudite discussion that characterizes *Decomposition*. After all, Horowitz does not tell us how to select our samples, estimate missing data, or tweak our models.

What Horowitz does do, however, and this will not go unnoticed or unmanipulated by Huber and her crowd, is to provide unstinting support for "objectivity" as a litmus test for sociological legitimacy. Whereas Horowitz (1993: 108) skillfully guts the innards of the late James Coleman's model of economic rationality ("Coleman does not...take us beyond a rather desultory set of *ad hoc* observations"), Horowitz (1993:104) nonetheless praises Coleman for his objectivity and humanity ("Indeed, one of the charms of Coleman is that he holds firm to this Enlightenment canon of objectivity and its rewards"). Just how

objective is a man, however, who from the top echelons of his profession joins in Huber's recommendations and, with managerial obsessiveness, laments to the effect that, "The basic flaw in academic organization is the failure to exact control of faculty time in exchange for salary" (Huber 1995:199)? Is it objective to use the lifeless *ad hoc* logics of econometrics to infer "flaws" in an organizational form wherein Coleman personally enjoyed a privileged, powerful position and would have been largely exempt from the increasingly onerous top-down, bureaucratic controls he recommended? In a word, no. Coleman embodied the height of academic arrogance and the pernicious inversion of objectivity.

The "imperial pretensions" that Horowitz (1993:117) rightly discerns among rational choice and other prestige-hungry cliques in the American Sociological Association have at least as much to do with the elitist arrogance of academic power as they do with inherently intellectual or epistemological arguments *per se*. Horowitz is a master of scholarly debate, but it is less evident that he attends as carefully or reflexively to the structural mechanisms of academic power that create "distinguished" scholars, "important individuals," "canons," and the like. Horowitz (1993:245, 247) maintains that there can be no "culture of civility" in sociology "without a dialogue among the classics of the social sciences," and that, centrally, "[w]hat remains, the underlying grit of social science as social practice, is the collective response to the struggle between important individuals who have gripped the minds and hearts of people from generation to generation." Here is Horowitz's own imperial pretension, for he, like Huber, sees neither himself nor his sociological friends as privileged, instrumental brokers of the very sociological canon they revere. The classics, the received canon, become for Horowitz an objective reality arising from a collective and presumptively democratic dialogue. We can admire Horowitz's romantic passion, but the "important individuals" he admires became important in large part due to historical accident, university politics, patriarchal and racist prejudices, and so on. This is not to say that those who become identified as "important" do not work hard or do not sometimes write provocative treatises, of course they do.

I take the view that most of us who pursue the scholarly life are equipped with pretty much the same intellectual abilities. The extent, however, to which these capabilities become disciplined, energized, and find a showcase is often a matter of luck, prejudice, sponsorship, and aggressive flattery. By contrast, says Horowitz (1993:249), "We must turn away from the idea that others adjudicate our conditions of life. We must want to adjudicate our own lives." That dichotomy is phony. We are, as Horowitz obviously knows, responsible agents acting in a society of institutionalized possibilities and coercions. Where we see and celebrate the opportunities for pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps, we must be simultaneously cognizant of the obstacles, limitations, and power structures that shape the real world of academia. In my experience, most people in the academy who become "important" become so largely due to position, pull, and perquisites—rarely from any arguably greater intellect, insight, or individual virtue.

The top people are not inherently more important than anybody else, we

simply have a society replete with hierarchical structures in which those who occupy the uppermost rungs in academia get more time and resources to create, publicize, and promote their work. Understanding that occupancy of the top spots results pretty much from sycophancy and the throw of structurally-loaded, often misogynist, racist dice is not news. I am confident that there are literally thousands of folks just as talented as James Coleman, Stanley Lieberman, Seymour Martin Lipset and the other luminaries that Horowitz admires who, if plopped down in elite schools and furnished with frequent sabbaticals, organizational support, endowed chairs, and the luxury of teaching largely at their own discretion, could produce work that would be at least equal to—and frequently surpass—the treatises regularly trotted out by the past and current casts of “important” sociologists.

The “important” sociologists create their own mythology, slap each other on the back, and promulgate the professional ideology that only those who merit election are selected into their rarified ranks.<sup>7</sup> The right to hand-pick one’s successors (and that is literally what tenure committees do) is a powerful tool in the reproduction of professional privilege and prestige. The “important” sociologists at each level of the hierarchy elect only those who bow or pledge obedience to this “importance,” *ad infinitum*. It is naive, given such a system, to suggest that the canon endorsed by the tenured cabal is a “collective response to the struggle between important individuals who have gripped the minds and hearts of people from generation to generation” (Horowitz 1993:247). This is neither an open nor democratic process, but a brutish bureaucratic nightmare in which people are gripped by the *throat* and threatened with job loss. Students are not free to read widely, they are *assigned*, coerced to read, if they read, from a canon approved by their professors, professors who have multiple vested interests in propping up the canon in which they are expert, which cites the literatures *their* mentors assigned, and so on. For example, would anyone give much notice to Robert Merton’s rather middling ideas if he were ensconced in a four-year, church-related college somewhere in southern Indiana teaching endless sections of intro classes rather than well positioned as a powerful professor at a prestigious university? I do not think so.

Ideological issues are now shaping academic discourse such that “objectivity,” “rationality,” and collegial “civility” are little more than codewords for canonical correctness. This is not how Horowitz intends these terms, but he helps set the stage on which Huber and her cronies can more easily appropriate these and related concepts for their own autonomous uses. Horowitz does not ignore ideological problems. Indeed, *Decomposition* is a welcome and vigorous foray into many ideological issues in sociology, but it is one sided; he holds up a one-way mirror to the discipline. Horowitz would be more instructive if he also examined the origins and developments of his own necessarily ideological positions.

Of my initial call for up-front, in-your-face ideological self-reflection, Horowitz (1993:47) writes in *Decomposition*:

A clear expression of this sort of analysis based on subjectivist premises, and its potential for political destruction, comes from a 1984 article in the *Mid-American Review of Sociology* by Michael R. Hill, who concludes by bemoaning the absence of works on ideology—not to expose shabby thinking as a road to ruin, but rather the absolute reverse: the need for ideology as “legitimate sociological thought.” He concludes by saying, “It is time to turn the tide: ideology first, axiology second, epistemology third.” It is a sad truth that the tide has indeed been turned, with outbursts of ideological thinking and subjectivist orientations bordering on solipsism being viewed as nothing less than the touchstones of an authentic social science.

Would that I could wield such influence, but, alas, I do not. I first read this tangled interpretation of my work in a 1989 issue of *Transaction* (Horowitz 1989) and at that time corresponded with Professor Horowitz concerning the main points. We had a pleasant and civil exchange. It is a surprise, therefore, to see myself critiqued in 1993 in the exact same words he used in 1989. This may be the start of a Sisyphean journey, but I must try again, for the points I made twelve years ago are still, I think, essentially valid. My central assertion then and now is a point that Irving Louis Horowitz, a humane man of letters, will I think ultimately tolerate if not fully share.

The language of epistemological argument fills untold volumes, and yet the fundamental philosophical dilemmas remain unsolved and are, perhaps, insolvable. Despite this impasse, pitched battles in myriad departments continue to be fought over the rightness or wrongness of one or another epistemological quagmire *as though such battles could be abstractly refereed by some neutral, unbiased, objective arbitrator*, as though “objectivity” still has consensual meaning and is exempt from ideologically-driven gaming. As a remedy, sociologists, individually and collectively, can and ought to ask the fundamental ideological question: What do I really want sociology to accomplish? Huber would make us unreflexive automatons, scientistic statisticians in the service of the state.<sup>8</sup> For myself, I seek something considerably more reflexive, democratic, emancipatory, and inclusive. At the conclusion of *Decomposition*, I still want to know what Professor Horowitz wants sociology to *do*, practically speaking, and how he thinks it can be accomplished given the coercive, hierarchical, politically-charged realities of academic life in a hyper-modern society. Whatever our answers, they are unavoidably ideological. This does not mean they are wrong or inherently destructive. It means only that all of our proposals are ideologically problematic, that none can legitimately claim special privileges or exemptions, and that we still have to figure out how to go forward in an inclusive, evenhanded, and democratic manner.

There is no royal road to objectivity, no unbiased canon from which objectivity can be deduced or pulled magically like a rabbit from a hat. We have ridden the epistemological horse to death. It is high time to return to the lifeworld of

living people, to lay our political cards on the table, to play civilly if possible, but to understand clearly that the game is for keeps and that the dice are loaded.

## Notes

1. Huber's dire account of the dangerous straits into which sociology as a whole has presumably drifted is based almost entirely on tendentious, anecdotal data and the fact that two (yes, two) sociology departments were terminated during the 1980s.
2. Huber, a former ASA president (elected in significant part by the votes of feminist sociologists she now disparages), appointed the ASA task group on graduate education that recommended, among other changes: removing students from departmental committees, adopting a few narrowly-defined core programs from which students cannot deviate, preparing *all* students for employment in governmental statistical agencies, and expunging most undergraduate and graduate courses that fall outside the limited concerns of three pet subareas—demography, social organization, and social stratification.
3. For instructive antidotes to Huber's anti-intellectual and anti-historical mystification, see Deegan (1988, 1991) and Reinhartz (1992).
4. The systematic empiricism of so-called mainstream sociological work "claims to be value-free and bias-free and uses quantified data, statistical theory, precise problems, careful research design, controls, and prescribed data-gathering techniques such as questionnaires and interviews" (Reinhartz 1984:8). Willer and Willer (1973) demonstrated conclusively, and from a positivist perspective, that systematic empiricism of the type Huber champions is methodologically absurd and intellectually bankrupt.
5. No would-be social science student's education is complete without careful study of Reinhartz's (1984) exploration of experiential sociology.
6. The gulf between "book culture" and "journal culture" is widening among American sociologists, to the detriment of those who focus almost exclusively on reading so-called mainstream journals. I am struck by Gusfield's (1995:xiv) telling observation that, "Becker's *Outsiders*, I venture to write, has had far more influence on the study of deviance than a decade of the *American Sociological Review*."
7. For an extraordinarily unabashed example of one such mutual admiration society in action, consult the hundreds of self-congratulatory, empire-building references in Kurtz (1984). Or, for slightly less parochial examples, consult any of the standard bibliographies documenting the self-perpetuating industries spun around the works of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Tocqueville and the like.
8. For an analysis of how such training manufactures technicians while thwarting the development of a "professional self," see Deegan and Hill (1991). Predictably, a pre-publication reviewer of this article accused the authors of collegial incivility and a total absence of objectivity.

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